

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, August 2. 1707.

OUR Eyes are now all fix'd upon one Object, it would be Nonsense to talk of any thing else for some time in publick News, *than the Siege of Thoulon*—The Wagers run high upon it already, and every body talks of this, as the most Famous Undertaking of the present Age, and indeed it is no less.

They say as Encouragement to this Enterprize, that never any thing of such Consequence was attempted with more promising Circumstances; such as the Amusing the Marshal *De Tefse*, with faints on the side of *Susa*, and the Valley of *Aouft*, and keeping him employ'd on that side with the Gros of the *French* Troops, till the Confederate Fleet arriv'd on the Coast, and all things were in a Disposition for immediate Action—Then the happy Arrival of that Fleet, so punctually, and so opportunely to assist in

transporting the Cannon, Ammunition, and Materials for the Siege, and the like.

If I may take the Account from those who have been at *Thoulon*, the greatest Difficulty lies in passing the Inaccessible Mountains on the Entrance into *Provence*, that when they come near to *Thoulon*, there is a Plain before the City, in which a Camp may very well lye, and a Regular Siege be begun; and since that is remov'd by the Troops coming by Sea, the Difficulty of taking the Town will not be so much, as perhaps may be apprehended.

I must confess, I make no doubt but the Siege will be a Work of Difficulty, and that the *French* will do, what Men can do for its preservation; the Consequence of the Loss being of the last Import to them; and really what Booty lyes there to be taken, is enough to amaze any Body at the Suggesti-
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on — I will not vouch even the probability of what some assert, that the Magazine of Naval Stores, Arms, and Artillery here, is the Greatest in the World ; that here are Stores, such as Sails, Anchors, Cables, Masts, and Rigging for the Fleet, enough for 100 Men of War ; that here are 42 of the biggest Ships the King of France has, whereof 13 are three Deck'd Ships ; that here are above 20000 Bartels of Gunpowder, 10000 pieces of Cannon, most of them Bras ; Arms for 30000 Men, and all sorts of Provisions for Sea and Land Service to a prodigious quantity ; this being the great Store-House of his Fleet, and the great Magazine both for Land and Sea Service, which the King of France has ; being appointed for the Supply of Italy, Naples, and Spain.

Indeed these are Great Things, and which seem to be rather fit to talk of than to be believ'd ; but without question, it is a Place of the last Importance to the King of France ; and unless the French Court are less prudent than in like or loss Cases they are always bound to be, they will not easily lose this Place of Importance, and by this I mean, they will not if possible suffer it to be besieg'd ; for I must own, if it be but once belieg'd, if the Germans come once to break Ground before it, I shall look upon it as lost ; for such is the Art of War of late, and so much improv'd, that no Town is Impracticable, no Place so strong, but it may be Ravish'd by force out of the Hands of those that defend it.

I shall not therefore suppose, the French will leave any thing unattempted for its Defence, and for defending the Passes in the Mountains, before they come to it, or the Shore, from a Descent ; and therefore if you do not hear of the Imperialists so soon getting before it, as in other Cases, you must not think hard ; since I am perswaded, that to be before the Town, and to take the Town are in this Sense much the same thing ; I say only in my Opinion ; I know there are various Circumstances which may render an Undertaking Abortive ; but I do not take the Town of Toulon to be equally strong with the other Cities of the World of like Importance, I mean by Land—By Sea it has all the Advantages of Situation, which a Port

of the last Consequence can desire, and together with that has all the additional helps of Fortifications, Batteries, &c. which Art can contrive, or Nature assist in ; and therefore the Attempt does not seem so probable to be made by Sea.

But by Land it has been out of all manner of apprehension of such a Storm as now threatens it, and no Man in the World could have imagin'd it Practicable, and therefore tho' the Works to the Town are very regular, exact, and formidable enough, yet neither has Situation, nor the help of Art given it proportion'd Advantages, and therefore you find the Defence on that side, will not be like that of *Venue*, or *Landau*, or *Namure*, and I am mistaken if it holds out above 25 to 30 Days of open Trenches.

I know there are still other Works to be taken, before the Fleet, Stores, and Magazines can fall into our Hands ; and the Fort Royal, behind which now the Ships are laid up, is a regular and beautiful Work, and requires another Siege to reduce it—But still it must fall into its Enemies Hands, if Relief by Sea be not procur'd, which seems Impracticable.

I am therefore not at all doubting, unusual and unexpected Accidents, which no body at this Distance can Account for, excepted, but that if the Imperial Army sets down before Toulon, they will carry it, take the Town, the Forts, the Fleet, the Magazines, and all the vast Stores laid up there, by so great and so plentiful a Provider as the King of France.

If any Man asks me what the Booty taken there may be like, or how to describe it, let him but look a Home, and suppose a French Army Landed in the Isle of *Skepey* in *Kent*, and Believing *Sheerness* Fort, and a Squadron blocking up the Mouth of the River *Medway* ; and upon Taking this, suppose all the *Etcetera's* of the Navy, which in a Winter, when the Fleet is laid up are to be found at *Chatham* Yards, where will be found the Gun-Yard, the Rope Walks, the vast Store Houses for the Ships, the Magazines, the Ships also in the River, and all the Materials for Building, &c. then imagine the Tower of *London*, and all the *Etcetera's* of the Ordnance-Office to be there with it ; and all this

this to fall into the Enemies Hand; then multiply this in a reasonable manner, and reckon what's there to be, the Ships only excepted, about three times as much, and you may perhaps have some probable guess at what is a doing there.

Upon these Considerations, it need no more be a wonder, that the Eyes of all Europe are upon this one Action, that even the Duke of Marlborough, and all the rest of the Confederate Forces in the World, are as it were content to stand still, and be Spectators of the War, to see the Issue of so Great an Undertaking.

No wonder Spain is not immediately reliev'd, the Empire on the Rhine supply'd, and other Measures taken, of which we have been so largely debating; this one Action will certainly if it succeeds, be so mortal a Stab to the Vitals of the French Empire, that if it be struck home it must expire, the French must give up the Cause, they must hold out the *Charte Blanche*, and consent to such Terms of Peace, as the Confederates please to bestow upon them.

Nor will all the Successes in Spain, or on the Rhine, be able to Counter-Balance these things; but as last Year the taking of *Hague-nau* was drowned in the Battle of *Rameilles*,

and the beating the *Massians* in the Fight of *Turin*; so the Battle of *Almanza*, and the Ravaging the *Pallatinat*, will be lost in the Taking of *Thoulon*; they will be no more heard of, they will be small things, both in the noise they will make in the World, and even in the Assistance they will be to the Affairs of the French.

The Attempt therefore, is an Action fit for such a General as Prince *EUGENE*; 'tis a Design big with Wonders, and no Man can foretel what the Issue of such an Undertaking may be; for my part, I care not to fill the Heads of the People with Great Expectations; the Genius of France is very high, and her Struggles under the pressures of the three last Years War, have convinc'd the World, that what is Impracticable to other Nations is feasible to her—But many Wounds will kill a *Cesar*, and repeated Stabs must at last waste her Spirits; she must die and sink under them, and so me it does not appear possible, she can survive such a Loss as this, without some other equal Advantage push'd at elsewhere; and in my next, I shall carefully examine what, and where this wonderful equivalent can be, or at least is probable to be found, if any such thing is to be thought of.

MISCELLANEA.

WE have a very good Story in the *Post Boy*, of July 15. in which they tell us, what a surprise the King of France was in, when they had acquainted him with the March of Prince *Eugene* of Savoy, and the Design of Besieging *Thoulon*; that in a great Passion the King should return *Thoulon*! *Thoulon*! What's the Reason *Chamillart* has told me nothing o it?—I shall say nothing here to the certainty or the improbability of the Story—For it is not at all the more or less useful, whether it be true or no.

But it cannot be amiss to Note the unhappy State of Great Princes, whose Subjects, for fear either of their Resentment at the management, or of their meer wayward and fiery Tempers, dare not acquaint

them of the true State of their Affairs, till some Extremity befalls them that the Fact discovers it self, and then no wonder they are under surprise enough, and their Passions are more violently mov'd.

If Monsieur *Chamillart* has conceal'd from his Master, a Thing so Material as this, till such a Crisis, wherein it will be too late to remedy it; His most Christian Majesty must be much fallen off from the Fury of his Temper, and that Fire in his Nature that us'd to distinguish him so much, must be strangely extinguish'd, if he does not make it fatal to that Minister.

Monsieur *Chamillart* made one false step last Year, which they say he conceal'd from the King, till he had made all the necessary Dispositi-

Dispositions for its Execution, and it could not be gone back from with Honour, I mean the Siege of *Turin*, in which the Disgrace and the Loss to the *French* Affairs was inexpressible ; and this it was said, was in order only to gratify the Ambition of some Great People, concern'd in the Interest and Honour of the Duke *De Feuilleade*, and the Success every body knows.

If he has made another False step now, viz. in furnishing large Detachments for *Spain*, and at the same time leaving so Important a Strength as *Thoulon* unguarded with a sufficient Army, he has gone a great way to lay the Foundation of the Ruine of his Master in his Mysterious Politicks, and when the old King comes to discover this, and that at the Expence of such an Action as this, he will resent it to *Cbamillart's* Destruction, or else he is not the same *Lewis* the *XIVth* that he us'd to be.

When Empires and Kingdoms come to their Crisis in the World, they never want Fools or Knaves to give them a lift downward ; the *French* Power has risen in the World by the exactest Management, that ever any Ministry in the World were Masters of, and if that Accuracy of Management declines, *Nature works always by Cause and Consequence*, The Power must decline also.

From this I have observ'd for some Years ; that ever since the Court Management at *Verfailles* has been acted by Parties, and those Parties peck'd at one another, their Affairs have generally gone backward.

And bringing this Home, I wish all our Gentlemen would apply it here, and Remark that— Our Prosperity has encreas'd here, but since we began to see the Folly of private Dissention, and since Party-Strife sunk under the general Sence of Peace and Union ; since we began to Conquer the horrid Monster of Division at Home, we have ever gain'd Ground of our Enemies, Victory has come over *us*, and all our Enterprises have been Crown'd with Success.

And from the same Rule we may venture to give this Caution ; that when ever you Betwixen fall out by the way, again, when-

ver Strife and Contention gets into your Councils, Parties and Prejudices into your Management, Envy and Ambition into your Conduct, you will just go back again as fast as now you go forwards.

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††† She lives at the Golden-Ball in *Hand Court*, over against *great Turn-Hile* in *Holborn*.